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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Remedies for Microsoft antitrust suit

I've been a system administrator, programmer and technical support person for about 25 years. As Microsoft's products and behavior have directly affected me and my clients (and will continue to do so), I must comment on the suit.

In all my years in the industry, I have seen relatively little of the often-claimed innovation of which Microsoft speaks. I have seen competitive companies purchased and put out of business - eliminating competing product lines. I have seen information obfuscated and altered in small, undocumented ways to preclude competition - and to force client's to upgrade to maintain basic compatibility within their own companies. I have seen (and continue to see) severe security flaws. These flaws have cost my clients and our whole economy enormous amounts to battle.

So, given a history of consistent, persistent abuses, I submit that only pervasive, unarguable remedies will cause Microsoft to alter its behavior.

Microsoft's proposal to provide large amounts of their products for use in the school's merely demonstrated their monopolistic behavior. The school's would have required ongoing support and upgrades - which would have cost more money that poor school's don't have in the first place. By entrenching themselves in the school's, they would have deepened their hold on the mind share of the next generation of computer users, thereby, perpetuating their monopoly.

In my opinion, these remedies ought to include (at least) the following items:

- Prohibit bundling contracts whereby the cost of the operating system is included invisibly in the cost of the system. That way, the consumer is aware of what he is paying for, and what alternatives would truly cost.

- Require formats and APIs to be documented. Microsoft uses much that is proprietary in their system, which can then, in turn, lock out competitors from creating competing programs. (The fact that Microsoft has the best-selling operating system with an embedded web browser, and the best-selling office software suite, gives them an almost airtight stranglehold on what is essentially a self-contained system.) Therefore, I recommend that all proprietary formats, protocols, etc., be opened: the API, itself, file formats for all (non-licensed) applications, communications protocols, and anything else that would

hinder competitors from being on a level playing field when writing applications for the Windows platform.

- Separate the application development from the operating system development. Microsoft application developers gain an unfair advantage in internal knowledge of Microsoft operating systems over their competition.

- Require email and web clients be separately installed from the operating system. Both Internet Explorer and Outlook are installed by default on Windows platforms. Most customers do not even know other alternatives exist. If a new Windows system prompted to install these components and indicated that alternatives exist (such as Netscape, Opera, Eudora, and others), then customers would have the chance to choose alternatives. This would also potentially reduce some of the impact of the security flaws - as most have been due to the email or web browser clients Microsoft provides.